

Message Text

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ACTION EA-12

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FM AMEMBASSY RANGOON
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USLO PEKING

C O N F I D E N T I A L RANGOON 2819

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PDIP BM CH KN
SUBJ: NE WIN TO VISIT PRC, DPRK

REF: RANGOON 2813 (NOTAL)

1. THE BURMESE PRESS ON SEPTEMBER 12 ANNOUNCED THAT PRESIDENT NE WIN AT THE INVITATION OF KIM II SUNG WILL PAY A "STATE VISIT" TO THE DPRK

,
AND THAT ON THE WAY TO NORTH KOREA HE WILL PAY A "FRIENDLY VISIT" TO THE PRC " AT THE INVITATION OF THE CHINESE GOVERNMENT." NO DATES WERE GIVEN FOR THE TRIP, BUT WE HAVE LEARNED FROM OTHER SOURCES THAT THE PRESIDENT PLANS TO LEAVE RANGOON SEPTEMBER 16. AFTER RETURNING FROM NORTH KOREA AND CHINA, HE IS SCHEDULED TO LEAVE AGAIN SEPTEMBER 28 FOR HIS ANNUAL R AND R AND MEDICAL EXAMINATION TRIP TO LONDON AND PROBABLY OTHER PLACES IN EUROPE.

2. THE NORTH KOREA VISIT HAS BEEN AGREED UPON IN PRINCIPLE FOR SOME TIME BUT REPEATEDLY PUT OFF BY NE WIN. THE INVITATION WAS REPORTEDLY EXTENDED IN 1974 DURING THE VISIT TO RANGOON OF DPRK VICE PRESIDENT KANG YANG UK AND RENEWED IN 1976 DURING THE VISIT OF DPRK FOREIGN MINISTER HO DAM. WE SEE NO PARTICULAR SIGNIFICANCE TO THE VISIT. THE NORTH KOREASNS WILL UNDOUBTEDLY

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LOBBY THE BURMESE IN CONNECTION WITH THE ANNUAL UN DEBATE ON KOREA, BUT THE BURMESE ARE NOT VERY SUSCEPTIBLE TO SUCH LOBBYING. FOR EXAMPLE, AT THE 1976 SRI LANKA NON-ALIGNED SUMMIT, HEAVY- HANDED NORTH KOREAN PRESSURE TACTICS PROBABLY HELPED MOVE THE BURMESE POSITION ON KOREA BACK FROM A SLIGHT PRO-NORTH TILT TO A MORE TRULY NEUTRAL POSTURE. MOREOVER, ALTHOUGH THEY WILL NOT MAKE AN ISSUE OF IT, THE BURMESE OPINION OF THE DPRK CANNOT HAVE BEEN

RAISED BY THE RECENT INDICATIONS OF GEM SMUGGLING BY THE NORTH KOREAN EMBASSY IN RANGOON (REFTEL).

3. THE VISIT TO CHINA, EVEN THOUGH IT IS ON A LESS FORMAL BASIS THAN THAT TO NORTH KOREA, IS UNDOUBTEDLY UPPERMOST IN NE WIN'S MIND; IN FACT, IT IS QUITE POSSIBLE THAT HE DECIDED TO GO TO THE DPRK AT THIS TIME JUST IN ORDER TO CREATE AN OPPORTUNITY TO VISIT CHINA. ALTHOUGH IT WAS MARKED BY LAVISH HOSPITALITY, NE WIN CONSIDERED HIS TRIP TO CHINA LAST MAY TO BE A FAILURE BECAUSE HE COULD NOT INDUCE THE CHINESE TO CURTAIL THEIR SUPPORT FOR THE BURMA COMMUNIST PARTY INSURGENCY. ANOTHER TRIP TO PEKING SO SOON MIGHT SEEM TO PUT NE WIN MORE PUBLICLY THAN HE WOULD WISH IN THE POSITION OF SUPPLICANT; BUT THIS IS EVIDENTLY A RISK HE IS PREPARED TO TAKE IN THE HOPE THAT TENG HSIAO-PING'S REHABILITATION WILL RESULT IN A MORE FORTHCOMING CHINESE POSITION ON THE BCP ISSUE. NE WIN REPORTEDLY BELIEVES HE RECEIVED A COMMITMENT FROM TENG, BEFORE HIS MOST RECENT FALL AT THE HANDS OF THE GANG OF FOUR, THAT AID TO THE BCP WOULD BE CUT, SO NE WIN IS HOPEFUL THAT HE CAN NOW PRAVAIL ON TENG TO IMPLEMENT THAT PROMISE.

4. ALSO, IT WAS ONLY WITH CONSIDERABLE DIFFICULTY AND AT THE COST OF HIGH CASUALTIES THAT THE BURMESE WERE ABLE TO TURN BACK THE RECENT MAJOR BCP EXPANSION EFFORT WEST OF THE SALWEEN; AND IN SPITE OF PUBLIC EXPRESSIONS OF CONFIDEO

CQ THE BURMESE SEEM TO BE IN-
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CREASINGLY CONCERNED ABOUT THE BCP THREAT. THIS COULD LEND SOME ADDED URGENCY TO NE WIN'S EFFORTS TO INFLUENCE THE CHINESE TO CURTAIL THEIR SUPPORT FOR THE INSURGENTS.

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